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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

Issue #37
May 28, 1976

FEB 14 '79

NEW REGIONAL PUBLICATION SETUP ADOPTED.....The 12-state North Central area has become the second Cooperative Extension Service region to establish a regional publications coordination plan. Iowa's Extension Service is coordinating the project. (A \$25,000 grant from USDA's ES will help finance it.) The states will develop publications on specific topics for regional or national use to avoid possible duplicate or overlapping publications at the State level. Also, the best qualified authors within the region can be selected to write a specific publication. The Northeast states have been operating under a regional publication plan for seven years. Washington, Oregon and Idaho have had a cooperative publishing setup for more than 25 years, and they estimate they have saved \$150,000 through their 150 common publications. (Contact: O. Bay, ES, ext. 76283)

SPRING PREVIEW MEETINGS WITH AGENCIES COMPLETED.....Agency heads and Department Staff completed discussions of critical issues. Issues discussed will be summarized for consideration by Assistant Secretaries, Under Secretary and Secretary. Budget and program guidance will be developed by early June. In the meantime, agencies should proceed with budget planning on the assumption that FY 78 will be another very tight year. (Contact: W. Blight, OMF, ext. 77451)

SECRETARY BUTZ RETURNED FROM A WORLD TRADE MISSION TO 10 NATIONS MAY 2, REPORTING THAT A "MAJOR EFFORT TO LIBERALIZE WORLD-WIDE TRADE RESTRICTIONS" IS NECESSARY.....Although each nation visited faced particular production and trade problems, Secretary Butz said that he had found each needed to expand its trade. He said CCC credits were being used to facilitate U.S. exports to seven of the 10 nations he visited. While on the trade mission, Secretary Butz signed agreements under the P.L. 480 program with Indonesia and Portugal. While in Bulgaria, Secretary Butz discussed a forthcoming trade mission from Bulgaria to the United States which will take place this year. (Contact: R.A. Smith, FAS, ext. 73138)

REA'S 2% FINANCING MAY BE CUT.....The House has passed and sent to the Senate a bill that would greatly reduce the number of borrowers eligible for REA loans at 2 percent interest. On electric loans, the legislation would eliminate the revenue per mile criteria for determining eligibility for 2 percent financing, and substitute a plant-to-revenue ratio standard. The present density criteria for electric borrowers remains unchanged at two or fewer consumers per mile. Telephone borrowers would be required to have three or fewer subscribers per mile of line to qualify for 2 percent loans, rather than two or fewer now required. (Contact: Jack Van Mark, REA, ext. 73106)

LEGISLATIVE ITEMS OF INTEREST.....

- ... Upgrading of USDA Policy Officials. The House Agriculture Committee reported H.R. 10133 which would upgrade certain USDA officials. See Newsletter #36.
- ... Overseas Training. The House Agriculture Committee reported H.R. 11868, providing overseas orientation and foreign language training for dependents of certain USDA personnel.
- ... Agriculture Research. The House Committee on Agriculture reported H.R. 11743, proposed National Agricultural Research Policy Act of 1976. Among its provisions are the establishment of an additional Assistant Secretary, and the establishment of a National Agricultural Research Policy Advisory Board. The bill also establishes three new non-matching Federal research grant programs: competitive research grants, mission-oriented research grants, and special human nutrition research grants.
- ... Ski Permits. On May 19, Sen. Haskell (D-Colo.) introduced an amendment to S. 2125, ski permits. The amendment would require that developers satisfy all local planning and licensing requirements before receiving the permit. The amendment would also require that the Forest Service verify all information furnished by the developers.
- ... Palm Oil and Whey. The Senate Agriculture Committee voted to report S. Res. 429, which would provide that USDA assess the whey supply and begin research for a more efficient use of whey; and an original resolution urging the President to seek voluntary agreements limiting palm oil imports.
- ... The Department recently made its 500th appearance before congressional committees since the first of the year. (Contact L&FR, OMF, ext. 74654)

ON MAY 25, THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE MARKED UP THE DEPARTMENT'S 1977 BUDGET..... They plan to report the bill with all other appropriation bills on June 4. The Committee:

- ... Restored nearly all of the program reductions proposed by the Department--adding back \$644.8 million of the \$698.0 million proposed to be cut.
- ... Added an additional \$20.6 million for new items as follows:

ARS, APHIS, CSRS (research).....	\$+5.1 million
ES (penalty mail & 1890 colleges).....	+5.5 million
FmHA (housing repair grants for elderly).....	+5.0 million
FmHA (personnel).....	+5.0 million
- ... Added \$300 million to the Child Nutrition Program and reduced the transfer of Section 32 money to that account by the same amount to insure sufficient Section 32 funds for price support purposes.
- ... Reduced the Department's request by \$10.3 million for the following:

Reimbursements to GSA for space.....	\$-3.2 million
Office of Secretary and Departmental Administration.....	-.2 million
APHIS (Pest detection and reimbursement to CCC).....	-.9 million
SRS - Multiple frames.....	-.4 million
ARS - Foreign Currency Research.....	-5.0 million
RDS - FAPRS.....	-.1 million
FAS - Switched export sales funding to Sales Manager (CCC).....	-.5 million
- ... Cut CCC restoration by \$709.6 million. This will still provide CCC with adequate funds in 1977.
- ... Increased FmHA loan levels by \$1,170 million for:

Housing, including \$500 million for guaranteed moderate-income housing.	\$+890 million
Farm Ownership.....	+100 million
Pollution Abatement.....	+ 50 million
Water and Sewer.....	+130 million
- ... Transferred RDS appropriation to FmHA.
- ... Prohibited the transfer of any funds to Cotton, Inc.
- ... Limited Working Capital Fund expenditures to \$50 million and required the approval of agency Administrators for any transfers to the WCF.
- ... Prohibited the Department from establishing employment ceilings for FmHA, ASCS, and SCS below 7,400, 2,473, and 13,955 respectively.
- ... Prohibited State ASCS offices from preventing county offices from authorizing any national ACP practice.

In total, the Committee's recommendations are \$245.5 million over the budget. However, disregarding the increase of \$300 million for Section 32 which should not increase Federal spending and the decrease of \$709.6 in CCC which will not decrease spending, the real increase in the Department's budget amounts to 655.1 million. (Contact: B. Sherman, OMF, ext. 76176)

ADP NEWS NOTES.....

- ... Delegation of Procurement Authority for SLCC. GSA provided USDA with a Delegation of Procurement Authority on May 13, 1976 for the St. Louis Computer Center. The Department must now advertise in the Commerce Business Daily so that interested parties may bid on the computer configuration.
- ... ADP Budget Ceiling. OMB plans on spot-checking documentation of four or five agencies which back up requests for FY 1976 and 77 ADP funds. See highlights of special May 25 Management Council Meeting.
- ... USDA ADP Management Plan. The Department's first ADP Management Plan has been published and distributed to Senior ADP Managers.
- ... USDA Second ADP Managers Conference. The Department's second ADP Managers Conference was held on May 13-14 and was rated 7.63 out of 10, compared to 8.18 for the first conference. (Contact: H. Meetze, ADS, ext. 76275)

FORMS AND REPORTS REDUCTION CAMPAIGN ENDED ON APRIL 30, 1976 WITH THE DEPARTMENT EXCEEDING THE GOALS SET BY THE SECRETARY FOR BOTH FORMS AND REPORTS.....

FORMS	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL	ESTIMATED SAVINGS
Eliminated	11,838	27%	\$19,239,535
Improved	358		\$ 12,415
Estimated Forms Savings			\$19,251,950

REPORTS	NUMBER	%	ESTIMATED SAVINGS
Eliminated	654	15%	\$ 3,116,561
Improved	106		\$ 248,037
Estimated Reports Savings			\$ 3,364,598
Total Estimated Savings			\$22,616,548

Assistant Secretary Bolduc appreciates the cooperation and leadership exhibited by each of you. On several occasions, he has said that the campaign could not have been successful without the input and support from all levels within USDA. (Contact: P. Doyle, OMF, ext. 75725)

SERVICE CENTER POLICY FIRMED UP..... Assistant Secretary Bolduc met with Service Center Agency Administrators regarding strategy to meet goal of 700 operational centers by June 30. Results of the meeting:
 ... Rotary telephone systems required unless 00 grants waiver.
 ... Additional help will be made available to those states with problems that are delaying implementation.

(Contact: Dick Hadsell, 00, ext. 73152)

SECURITY UPDATE.....

... First three weeks operation of new security systems indicates that thefts are down:

Incidents	Monthly Average -			Actual -		
	May 75	thru April 76	Complex	May 1	thru 21, 76	Complex
Thefts of Government Property	19	15	2	7	6	-
Thefts of Personal Property	26	21	3	5	2	2
Acts of Vandalism	8	7	1	2	2	-
Assaults	1	.6	-	-	-	-
TOTAL ALL ACTS	54	43.6	6	14	10	2

... Obscene Telephone Calls Increased the Last Week of April and Continued Into Early May 1976. Information indicates that the calls originated from the same person and were discontinued when male employees began to answer the telephones receiving the calls.

... Emergency Exits. In response to employee concern regarding emergency evacuations from the South Building, note the following: doors opening onto C Street and Independence Avenue are designated emergency exits and are equipped with "panic" hardware which allows ready exit by simply pushing the panic bar downward. However, the doors are closed to uncontrolled entry. Wings 1, 3, 5, and 7 are not available for routine personnel traffic. Wings 2 and 6 are closed to routine personnel traffic except 7-9 a.m. and 4-6 p.m., Monday through Friday. Employees are cautioned that controls to enforce stated use of emergency exits are in effect and that violators will be reported to appropriate Agency officials for necessary administrative action.

... Fire Alarms. In response to employee concern regarding the operativeness of the fire alarm system in the South and Administration Buildings, employees are advised that the fire alarms for those buildings consist of several zones. Each zone is set to operate independently of all other zones. The general alarm must be activated to sound the alarm simultaneously throughout the complex. The alarm system is periodically tested by GSA technicians under engineering supervision.

(Contact: Carl Tant, OI, ext. 76001)

QUARTERLY PLANNING, BUDGETING & MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM REPORT SENT TO ASSISTANT SECRETARIES.....
 The report, issued by Mr. Bolduc on May 18, 1976, is based on information supplied by the agencies and summarizes key development on USDA objectives. (Contact: Steve Dewhurst, OMF, ext. 73226)

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE BY SUMMER CAMPS..... Summer camps receive assistance from several USDA agencies. Segregated sessions are frequently the rule rather than the exception. Termination proceedings in the case of camps sponsored by the Plast-Ukrainian Youth Organization are in the final stage. OEO evaluation of program compliance reviews indicates unjustified reasons for the numerous segregated sessions. There has also been duplication of reviews by two agencies where each contributes to the camp. A full range review by OEO will extend through the 1977 camping session with emphasis on severe tightening of controls by the agencies involved. (Contact: M. Washington, Jr., OEO, ext. 74256)

REVISED MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES BEING DEVELOPED..... Staff offices have submitted revisions to Mr. Bolduc based on Gettysburg discussion. Final package should be distributed to Management Council members by Friday, May 28. (Contact: Steve Dewhurst or Jim Olmes, OMF, ext. 73226)

TELEPHONE COSTS RISING DRAMATICALLY..... Since 1966, USDA's annual FTS costs have risen from \$2.8 million in 1966 to \$10.5 million in 1976. The pro-rated cost per call has remained relatively constant at \$1 to \$1.25 (currently \$1.10). The increased cost is primarily due to the increased number of calls (2.3 million in 1966 to 9.6 million in 1976) and an apparent lack of concern on the part of the user. Billings indicate some calls lasting more than an hour. Closer evaluation of agency billings is warranted. Another factor to high telephone costs is local calls outside the Government system to home, weather bureau, etc. In Washington, D.C., Government-wide, these calls at approximately \$0.05 per call, are costing \$285,000 per month. Unit managers should be made aware. (Contact: Bill Roth, 00, ext. 75225)

AMS HAS HIRING SIGN OUT AGAIN..... Agricultural Marketing Service, which recently hired and trained 210 new federal grain inspectors, now plans to hire up to 335 more. Final figures will depend on the form of new Grain Inspection legislation pending in Congress. Tentative job offers are now going out to persons selected from Civil Service Registers. (Contact: I.W. Thomas, AMS, ext. 74638)

MANAGEMENT COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS.....

.. May 20 Meeting

- ... Importance of President's Public-Use Form Reduction Campaign was stressed. President Ford has personally charged each cabinet member and the Director of OMB with success for the mandated 10% reduction of public use forms by June 30. Only critical forms are to be maintained. At present, USDA has reached 50% its goal - a 5% reduction. Council members were reminded about the May 27 meeting in room 218-A during which each agency reported progress, future implementation plans and expectations for achieving the reduction goal. Additional progress meetings are planned to assure that USDA meets the President's mandate.
- ... George Bickerton reported that USDA has not yet reached the 75% participation goal in Saving Bond subscriptions - however, all results are not in yet. The Newsletter will publish the final tally when available. It was suggested that many new employees are unaware of the benefits of the savings bond program to themselves and the nation's economy.
- ... Results of tests on merit promotion and appraised system were discussed. Council is to review a comprehensive results package on the subject - planned for distribution before the June council meeting - and will vote on uniform guidelines, procedures and implementation date soon.

.. May 25 Meeting

- ... Council was informed that OMB plans to review USDA proposals for FY 1976 through FY 1977 ADP operations. OMB's top staff - both ADP and program people - will then visit USDA and "spot check" four or five agencies within the Department. It is expected that the emphasis will be on demonstrating - through documentation of solid facts - the need for each agency's ADP commitment - dollars and manpower - to support their program work. The OMB team will probably meet with Department staff before meeting with agency staff. Top level involvement and review of ADP/program issues was encouraged.